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THE HILLANDALE NEWS

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COVER PHOTOS: Front, Frank Andrews is recorded for posterity on wax, aided by Duncan Miller, with Paul Morris at the piano.
Back, top, Miles Mallinson is rewarded for his horn-making efforts by winning a prize, here being presented by Ted Cunningham. Our new Vice President, Dave Roberts, is seen applauding in the wings.
Below, Chilterns member John Smith (actually, he lives in Surrey) is posed between two handsome horns, and Miles Mallinson didn't make either of them!

All these pictures are from the 1986 Phonofair at Pyrford.

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The British Blues

CRISIS ON THE HOME FRONT 1915

by George Frow

The Edison Blue Amberol cylinders had been introduced to the United States market in October 1912, and in Great Britain in February 1913 where the numbering system started at 23001. Edison's London factory was already closed and the British Blue Amberols were manufactured and exported from West Orange. Recording for this British list continued at Edison's Clerkenwell (London) headquarters until that was shut down in December 1913, but appears to have been carried on in London probably until well into 1914, but this is conjecture.

It is the intention of this article to compare the British and American issues, especially where the same cylinder was given both British and American catalogue numbers, and to look more closely at the last British Blue Amberols soon after the outbreak of war between Great Britain, France and Germany on August 4th 1914. These were almost all of American origin.

The transfer of one country's Blue Amberols to the catalogue of another does not seem to take place outside the American and British lists. True, the Banda Militar de Nueva York appeared in the Spanish, Argentine and other lists, but it was playing pieces of those nations. Exchanges, sometimes for unexplained reasons, took place between the American and British lists. For example, one artist whose records appeared in both was Harry Lauder, but he was equally at home entertaining in either country and eventually moved his recording talents exclusively to Victor and The Gramophone Company about 1912. Edison re-issued Lauder's wax Amberols as Blues in 1913 and again towards the end of the 1920s. At least one of his earlier cylinders (23022/1822 *Wee Hoose 'mang the Heather*) carried both British and American numbers.

In the other direction Collins and Harlan made one appearance in the British catalogues with 1978/23075 *I Want to be down in Dixie* in May 1913. They must have been popular here to have had that one issue, but why no more?

The outbreak of the Great War impelled staff at West Orange to comb wax Amberol files and find rousing cylinders for the British public, and the following joined the catalogue here in October 1914:

Blue No.		wax Amb.
23330	13	<i>Cavalry Charge/Edison Military Band</i>
23332	690	<i>Triumphal March/New York Military Band</i>
23336	251	<i>Two Grenadiers/Earl Cartwright</i>
23339	1081	<i>Passing Review/National Guard Fife and Drum Band</i>

Domestic issues continued, consisting largely of reissues of wax Amberols of a stirring nature until the following August, when recent home-cut material seems to have been all used up. In this month - August 1915 - the first bulk American recordings for the British market arrived, and these continued until the end of the British Blue Amberols, probably in the first quarter of 1916. Those at the beginning were highly patriotic, though somewhat ingenuous, but gradually the calls to King, home and country were toned down to become standard sentimental songs found in the American lists of the day. Only four Blue Amberols of British origin appeared in this batch, ballads by Stanley Kirkby, Hughes Macklin and Hardy Williamson.

The American cylinders are as follows, and show both British and American numbers where applicable, and Diamond Disc numbers:

British	U.S.	Disc
23362		<i>Sons of Old Britannia /Thomas Chalmers</i>
3		80232 <i>Call to Arms/Peerless Quartet</i>
4		<i>Farewell Isabelle/Reed Miller</i>
5		80231 <i>Fall In/Vernon Archibald</i>
6		<i>Make me King of Your Heart/Emory B. Randolph</i>
7		80230 <i>Boys in Khaki, Boys in Blue/Frederick Wheeler</i>
8		<i>Bravo Territorials/Elizabeth Spencer</i>
9		80231 <i>John Bull's Catechism/Arthur Crane</i>
23370		80232 <i>Your King and Country Want You/Helen Clark</i>
1	2640	50249 <i>There must be Little Cupids in the Briny/Billy Murray</i>
2	2619	80283 <i>My Bugler Boy/Helen Clark</i>
3	2614	<i>Friend/Frederick Wheeler</i>
4		50253 <i>Row me on the River, Romeo/Billy Murray</i>
5	2648	<i>Land of my Dreams and You/Walter van Brunt</i>
6		<i>Here we are, Here we are, Here we are again/ Frederick Wheeler</i>
7	2632	80236 <i>When the Daffodils are Blooming/Metropolitan Quartet</i>
8	2621	80235 <i>Bid me to Love/Emory B. Randolph</i>
9	(2580)*	(80226) <i>I'm Glad my Boy Grew up tp be a Soldier/ Helen Clark</i>
23380	2643	80236 <i>Love is King of Everything/Reed Miller</i>
1	2634	50246 <i>Valcartier March/Sodero's Band</i>
2		<i>Men of England/Frederick Wheeler</i>
3		<i>Sunshine of YOur Smile/Alfred Shaw</i>
4		<i>Nelson Touch/Donald Chalmers</i>
5		<i>When the Band Begins to Play/Billy Murray</i>
7	2672	50259 <i>Some Little Girl Named Mary/Irving Kaufman</i>
8	2673	80246 <i>Drifting with the Silver Tide/Clark & Wheeler</i>
9	2676	50254 <i>Take me back to your Heart/George Wilton Ballard</i>

23392		Red, White and Blue/Walter van Brunt
3	2686	80246 Love me as you Used to Love me/Reed Miller
4		80254 Somebody's Boy/Elizabeth Spencer
5		Nothing at all/Joseph Phillips
6	2583	80269 That was the End of my Dream/Hardy Williamson
7	2696	50277 I Like your Town/Glen Ellison
8	2706	80270 Spring's Awakening/Mary Carson
9	2705	50284 Sailing on the Good Ship Sunshine/Irving Kaufman
23400	2704	50271 Destiny Waltz/Jaudas Society Orchestra
1	2745	You're my Girl/Walter van Brunt
2	2720	50293 Which Switch is the Switch, Miss, for Ipswich? /Billy Murray
3	2721	50277 Wee little House that you Live in/Glenn Ellison

*There is confusion over the numbers on this recording - see paragraph below

All these were dubbed from Diamond Discs and most are of a good quality for such cylinders. A few, especially the early ones, are on the short side, but there was not always the quality in the song to sustain a longer recording. As will be seen, not all the Diamond Disc originals were released.

These cylinders used to found fairly often in Great Britain, especially those with patriotic content, but some are decidedly curious. *A Call to Arms* for instance has the fatuous line "The General has just gone into his tent - let's serenade him": and they do, and he thanks them! *Fall In* is a variation of "What did you do in the war, Daddy?" while *Bravo Territorials* was dated, even for those times. *John Bull's Catechism* plagiarises G.H. Macdermott's 1878 by-jingo song with "We don't want, Boys, but when we let it go ..." and John Bull becomes an Uncle Sam-like character. Helen Clark's *My Bugler Boy* is too cloying for comfort; "My Bugler Boy, I love you, I love you, I do love you so" to a bugle-call tune is hard to take, but at least it's a bright dubbing. Helen Clark appears to be ambivalent with *I'm Glad my Boy Grew up to be a Soldier* on the British list and *I Didn't Raise my Boy to be a Soldier* on the American, but without hearing both versions, this could well be the same recording with a different piece of the chorus in use as the title. A point of interest with *I Didn't Raise my Boy to be a Soldier* by the Jaudas Orchestra on Edison Disc 50252 is that it was 'cut out for patriotic reasons'.

With Frederick Wheeler's *Here we Are, Here we Are, Here we Are Again* there is an opportunity to hear the verse of this popular song, while *The Sunshine of Your Smile* is the very same that aspiring bar-room tenors take on, but it is not well recorded. *The Nelson Touch* is for sailors and has the word 'lad' stuck on the end of many of its lines. It is strange to hear Billy Murray singing about the Daily Mail and meals for one-and-sixpence in *When the Band Begins to Play*, but this is a British escapist song by Bidgood, probably Thomas Bidgood the father of Harry (Primo Scala). *Three Cheers for the Red, White and Blue* is in a form hardly worth two cheers, while Joseph Phillips in *Nothing at all* gives mention to the German army, navy and Jellicoe.

Due to war conditions in Britain and demand on the factory at West Orange, it is unlikely that any of these Diamond Discs reached British shores.

The British catalogue had now become clogged with cylinders of songs of

American origin and out of character with what had gone before, and it is puzzling that some songs that could have been included were allocated American numbers only. All but two in the following random list of such records were issued before the British catalogue came to an end in early 1916; the quality of the direct recordings among them is superb.

- 2438 *God Save the King*/Peter Dawson
- 2461 *Soldiers of the King*/Joseph A. Phillips
- 2486 *Rule Britannia*/Albert Farrington
- 2487 *Tipperary*/Albert Farrington
- 2747 *Call of the Motherland*/Frederick Wheeler
- 2773 *Till the Boys Come Home (Keep the Home Fires Burning)*/Frederick Wheeler
- 2869 *Boys of the Dardanelles*/Frederick Wheeler
- 3590 *My Old Shako*/Peter Dawson

Later in the career of Blue Amberols the British catalogue was used to provide several cylinders for the American listing; Harry Lauder has been noted already, and two of Olly Oakley's pieces *Sweet Jasmine* (5300) and *Fusilier Patrol* (5423) received a late reissue in celluloid form many years after Oakley's demise.

A researcher into the issue dates of the British Blue Amberols is hampered at the end of their time by the complete lack of reference to them in talking machine journals here. Frank Andrews in his excellent introduction to the late Sydney Carter's Blue Amberol Cylinders is not able to suggest any issue dates after October 1915, and the last block of seventeen cylinders (nos. 23387 to 23403) has no release dates allocated. They were allowed to trickle out from November 1915 to March 1916 when the U-boat campaign caused a national prohibition of unessential imports. Records coming into the country had borne a 33½% tax from October 1915.

Study of the Diamond Disc numbers in the table of Anglo-American cylinders shows that 50277 (Glenn Ellison) was first noticed in the States in January 1916, so the first cylinders from this disc to reach these shores could well have been on or after that month. This is a foggy area and it is not easy to visualise where this information will ever be confirmed.

The recording activity of one artist, Hardy Williamson, is not clear. This tenor appears in the Edison lists for the first time on the British Blue Amberols in direct recordings, but it seems to have gone to the United States (was he an American?) in 1914, and in 1915 and thereafter made a number of Diamond Disc sides as soloists or with others. One side of these was issued as Blue Amberol 2683, but no further cylinders bearing this name were issued.

Nowhere in any of the Edison record catalogues is there a stranger or more difficult skein to unravel than these last British issues.

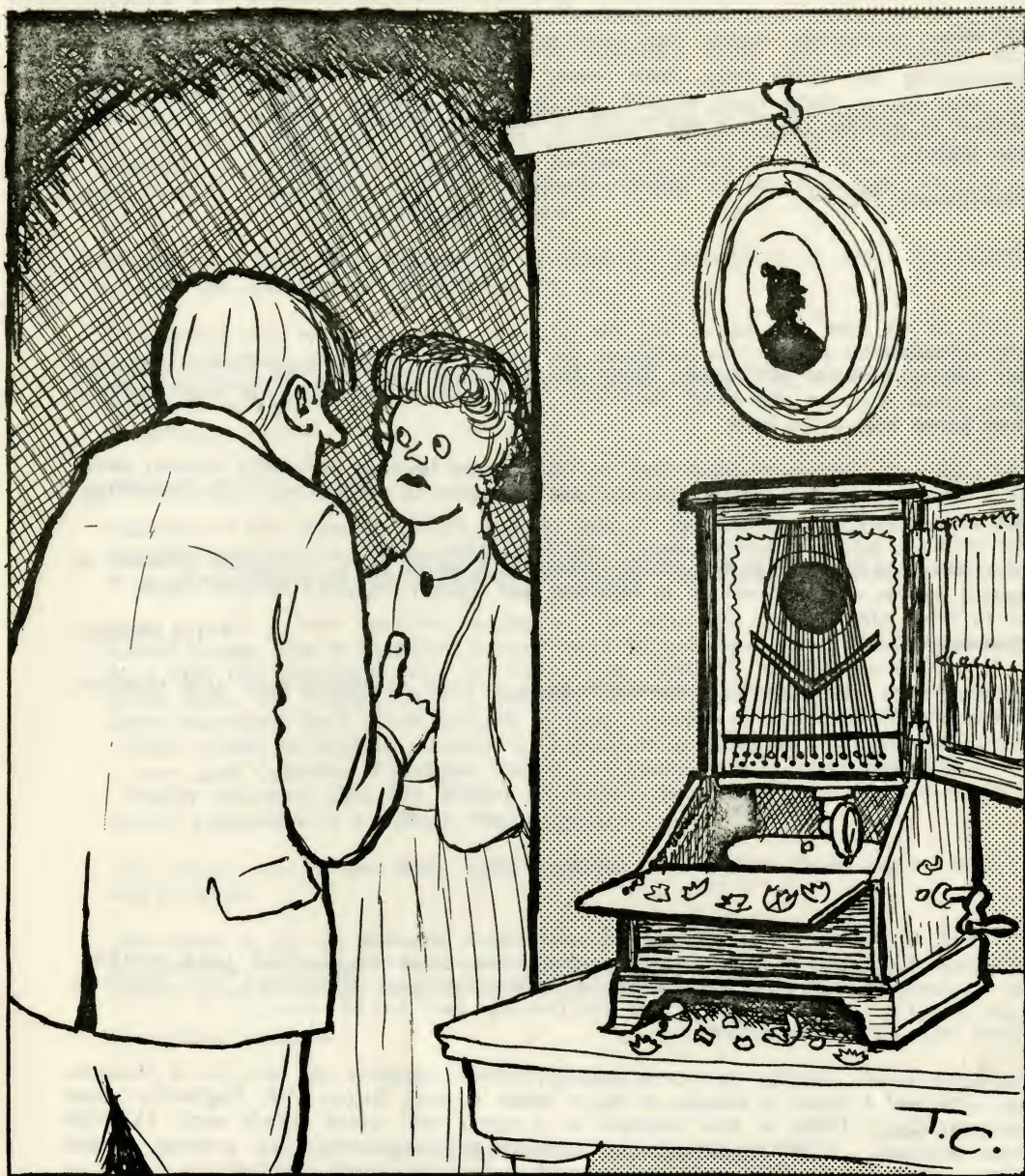
Reference Sources:

Blue Amberol Cylinder Catalogue, complete; published by T.M.R., 19 Glendale Road, Bournemouth
BH6 4JA

Edison Disc Recordings (Raymond R. Wile)

Edison Disc Artists and Records (Wile and Dethlefsen)

(Both these are obtainable from the Hillandale Booklist)



"You've been slicing boiled eggs again!"

A QUESTION OF COST?

Dear Sir,

With reference to the News Chronicle competition (August Hillandale, pp. 69-70), remembering the 1930s when every penny had to count for something, I imagine that the Decca could have outsold the Brunswick because it was cheaper. The question of whether the band was British or American may not have entered into the sales figures.

Bournemouth, 10.9.86

Ernie Bayly

Dear Christopher,

The August issue of Hillandale (Page 61) expressed surprise that a Puck machine when fitted with an aluminium horn cost 9/6 as against 6/- for the same machine when fitted with a tin horn.

This apparently disproportionate cost no doubt arose because early this century aluminium was very much a modern product and expensive to produce with the technology then available.

As a means of minimising mass to be moved with spring drive, aluminium provided an obvious answer and, because of its lightness and rigidity, required no horn crane.

Plymouth, 25.9.86

Joe Pengelly

(In practice, tin horns of comparable size to most aluminium ones also required no crane - Ed.)

=====

Our new Secretary, Ken Loughland has been using up his last months of freedom (he was elected to the post in October) by touring East Anglia - judging by the following two letters.....

During a recent holiday in North Norfolk, where motoring can still be a pleasure, my wife and I spent a couple of happy hours visiting Sutton Mill, England's tallest windmill (built 1789), a fine example of a tower mill which stands some 1½ miles from Stalham. After spending some time in the interesting, and growing, Broads Museum at ground level, we began to explore the mill itself, climbing from floor to floor up the internal ladders.

On reaching the second stage up from the ground we were surprised to come face-

to-face with a display of record labels on their shellac disc centres. There were, at a rough estimate, about 130-odd, some familiar, and several others not so - I only hope that every one came from a disc which had become unplayable before being put to the saw!

Back on the ground I spoke to the owner, Mr. Chris Nunn, who told me of his plans to restore the fine mill to a working condition. As for the record labels, Mr. Nunn explained that these were objects of interest to him as well, and he went on to say that he would like to mount a suitable display at the mill next year to mark the centenary of the first Berliner patent.

Wishing Mr. Nunn every success, I obtained his permission to make his intentions know to the members of our Society.

Incidentally, Mr. Nunn has been helped in his mill restoration work by his wife and teenage daughter, of which latter there are displayed photographs showing her braving the East Anglian winds atop the 80-foot structure along with her father. "Die Schöne Müllerin" indeed!
Maidenhead, 16.6.86

And, two months later:

Recently, in the pleasant Suffolk seaside town of Southwold, noted for its fine church, its lighthouse and its commendably real ale, I came across a display of some twenty or so gramophones set out on one of the 'greens' which are a feature of the town.

First, a sight of the machines on display, and then the unmistakable voice of Leslie Sarony issuing from a Columbia portable with plano-reflex tone-arm, closely succeeded by a ripe Gus Elen-type voice (or was it Gus himself?) singing the virtues of toad-in-the hole, and coming from a red-label EBW on an Edison Bell cabinet machine. Other machines, lined up to perform in turn, included an HMV 157, a 104, a Selecta cabinet model, an Antoria portable, a Cliftophone portable with horizontal diaphragm, a very good Columbia Viva-Tonal cabinet, a Dulcet table grand, and several others. Proudly displayed also, but obliged to remain mute where it stood, was an enviable Expert equipped with a Collaro electric motor.

Also shown was a one-valve radio receiver, some gramophone parts, needle tins and so forth.

The owner of all the material shown was Mr. Joe Hurren of Southwold, whose object in mounting the display was to raise funds for a worthy local purpose and, of course, to give pleasure to the many interested passers-by. All very enjoyable.

Maidenhead, 15.8.86

With kind regards, Ken Loughland

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AT BLOOMSBURY, NOVEMBER 25TH

For our monthly meeting at the Bloomsbury Institute on November 25th 1986, Michael Kinnear will be talking on The Record Industry in India. As usual, the starting time will be 7.00 p.m.

A Horn of Your Own

L.M.Mallinson

Having purchased at different times two Pathe disc machines, both in appalling condition, with only some 50% of their components usable, I was presented with the challenge of making many new parts.

I found little difficulty in the making of items like reproducers, tone-arms, spindles, gears and even elbows (I am a lecturer in machine shop engineering in Further Education), but the opportunity to make a brass horn of the type shown on Page 85 of Christopher Proudfoot's 'Collecting Phonographs and Gramophones' really set me thinking.

My first move was in the direction of the Sheet Metal Department of my college, for information and advice, without which I could not have produced the horns which I now have, and many thanks must go to the lecturer in that department.

The Design:

Using the photograph already mentioned, I estimated the size as being approximately 18" diameter and possibly 20" in length, with the primary cone about 6" long. The diameter of the cone at each end would be $3\frac{1}{4}"$ and $1\frac{3}{4}"$. Although the mathematics of the exponential was well known in the early days of horn production, I am sure that most manufacturers designed them by drawing out what appeared to be a 'good shape'.

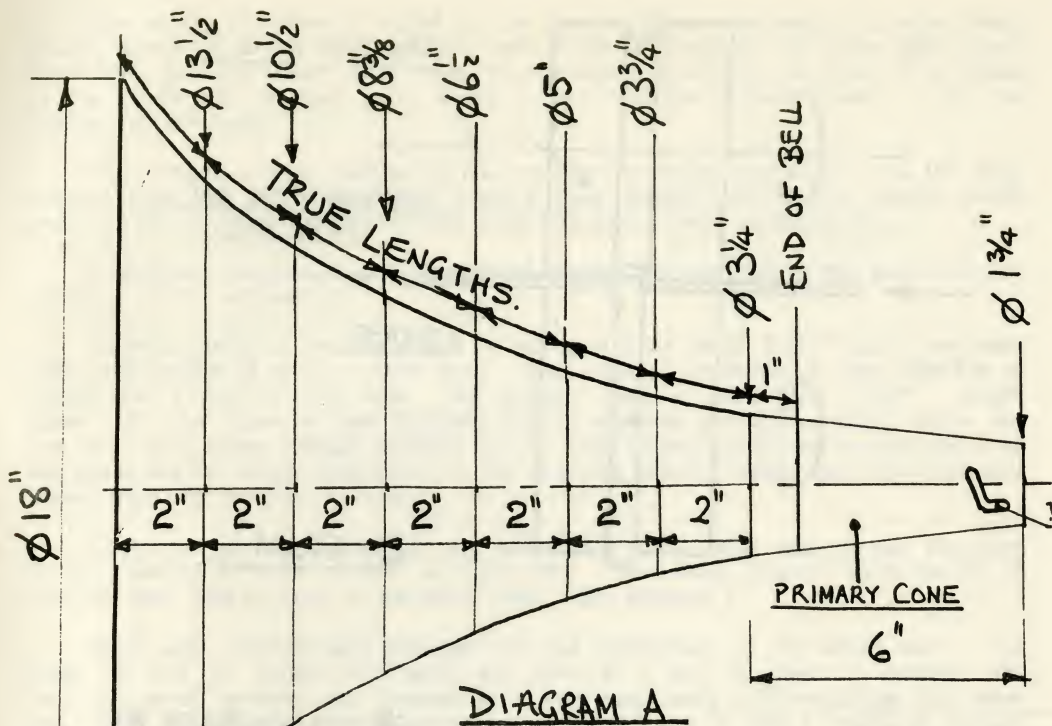
I did the same, producing a scale drawing of the side elevation, and marking in lines every 2" of length (Diagram A).

Each diameter is divided by the number of petals required and multiplied by $\pi(\frac{22}{7})$, to obtain the width of each petal at each 2" point. Diagram B shows the pattern for a nine panel horn.

The 2" spacings of Diagram A are corrected to their 'true lengths' in Diagram B so that the petals are made to their correct dimensions lying along the edge of the horn, not along its centre.

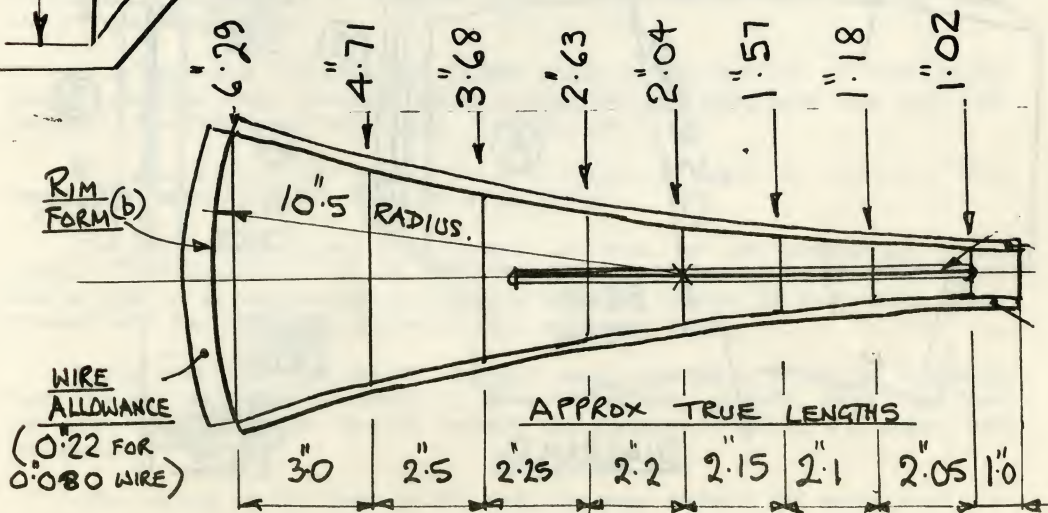
I chose an $1/8"$ wide groove seam for attaching each petal to its partner, and this required an allowance to be added down each side of the petal. The allowance is $1.5 \times$ seam-width, which is $3/16"$ in the example.

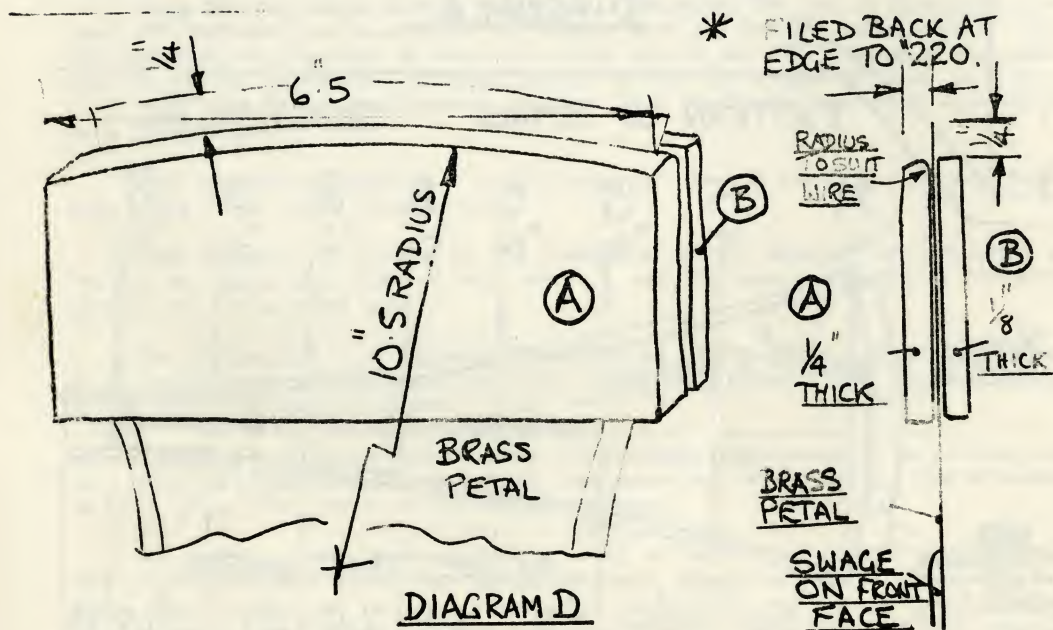
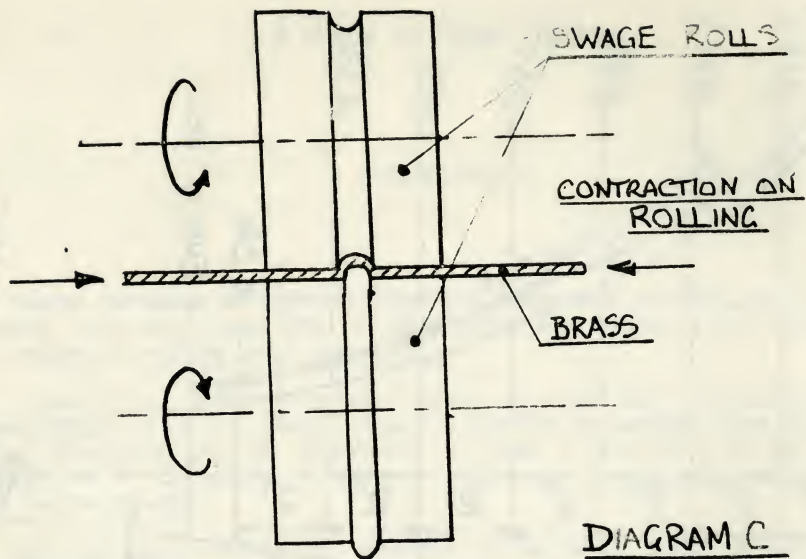
The rim is usually finished with a wired or false wired edge to give strength and good appearance to it, but before the wire allowance can be shown, the rim shape or form must be chosen. This can be (a) straight, (b) convex, (c) concave or (d) more complicated shapes, and must be added to the petal pattern.



PATTERN OF PETALS

Diagram B.





The wiring allowance is added to the outside of the rim shape, its value being $2D+4T$, where D is the wire diameter and T the thickness of the brass sheet used. For 0.080" wire and 0.015" thick brass, the allowance is 0.220". An extra 1" is added to the elbow end of each petal where it fits into the primary cone, to give an overlap for the joint.

The swaged groove position is now marked on to the drawing; it is 10" long, starting from the point where the primary cone finishes. The swage usually stands proud on the outside of the horn, and gives strength as well as decoration.

A tinplate template is now accurately marked out and cut to the petal pattern, including all the allowances.

Suitable material for the petals is half-hard brass sheet 0.015" thick, but brass shim will suffice if it is a little soft. This brass is expensive to buy; £30-£40 is typical for a horn of this size. The primary cone is made from 0.025" - 0.030" brass. All the brass is best polished before marking out and cutting, while you can still apply heavy enough pressure on it. The tinplate template can be laid over the brass and its shape transferred to the brass by pencil, finding the most economic layout from the material available.

Rough-cut out all the petals and with really sharp snips trim up the rim ends to size leaving a small amount on both sides. The swage grooves must be put in now, as they tend to draw in the petal sides. See diagram C.

Mild steel formers are required for the production of the wired edge. Cut from $\frac{1}{8}$ " and $\frac{1}{4}$ " bright mild steel, and form as a pair as shown in diagram (D). Grip the petal between the formers in a vice and, using a G-cramp on the other end, close down the $\frac{1}{4}$ " wiring allowance on to the top of the $\frac{1}{4}$ " radiused former. Remember to bring the edge over on the same side as the swage groove.

A hide mallet of approximately 1" to $1\frac{1}{2}$ " diameter should be used for turning the brass edges. On no account must anything harder be used or stretching and permanent marks will occur. File off surplus wire allowance back to 0.220" using the $\frac{1}{4}$ " former as a guide.

A suitably bent piece of wire (0.080" brass) is laid over the $\frac{1}{8}$ " thick closing former and their roles reversed, gently closing the rim edge down over the wire, followed by tucking in its inside edge. See Diagram E.

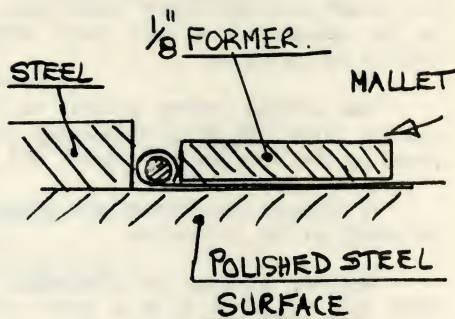
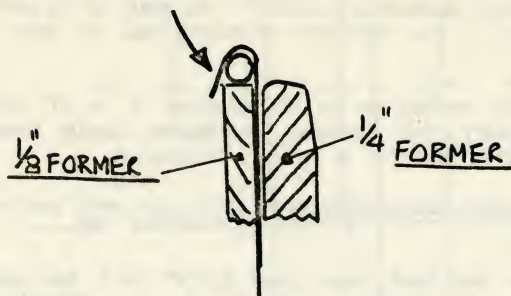
On completion of the edges, the wire should be pulled out leaving a false wired edge, which is much lighter and amply strong.

Two steel formers are now required $\frac{1}{8}$ " thick for the manufacture of the seams. They must be cut to the petal edge curve, be the full length of the petal and as deep as is possible without fouling the swage. N.B: a $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick steel former is made with the other two, as a set. This one is used later.

Clamp petals between the two formers using vice and a number of G-clamps. Carefully set over the $\frac{1}{8}$ " seams to 90° . Remember, as each petal must have one seam set outwards and one set inwards, the direction of setting will always look the same.

After setting all the seams at 90° using the seam formers, the seams must now

CLOSE DOWN



CLOSING DOWN

TUCKING IN

DIAGRAM E Finishing off the wired edges.

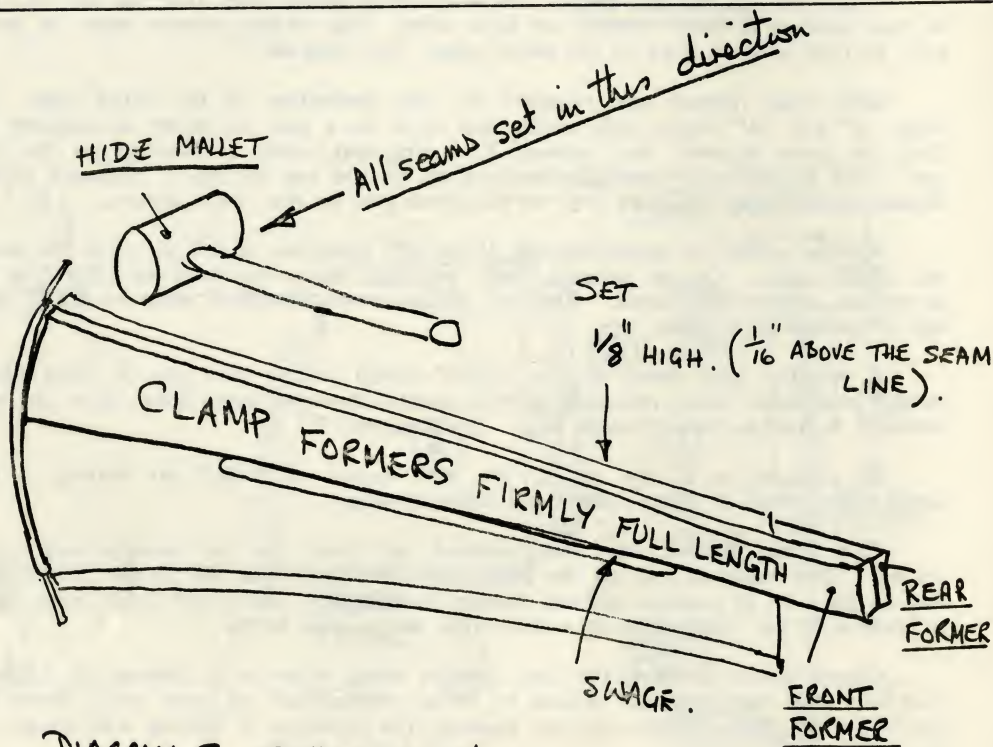
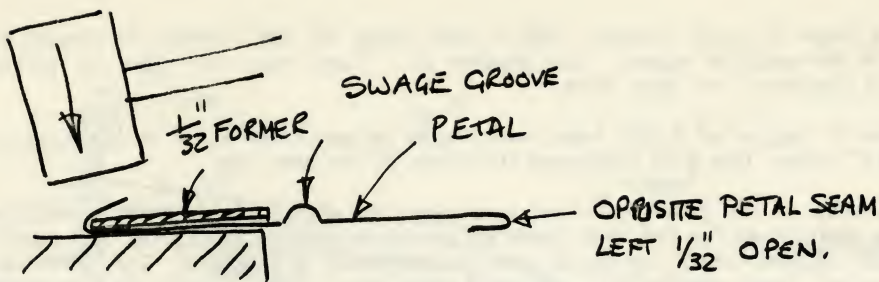


DIAGRAM F Setting over the seams.



CLOSING DOWN SEAMS

DIAGRAM G.

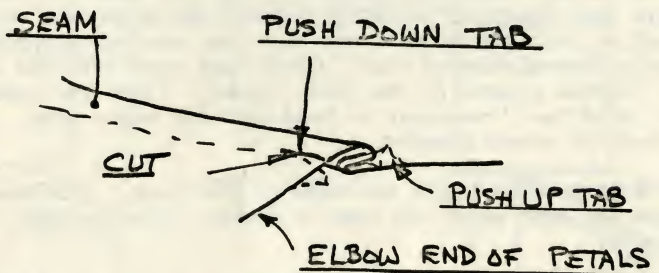
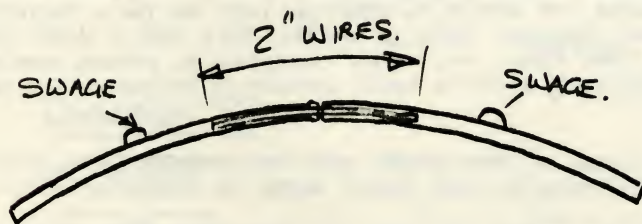


DIAGRAM H.

be closed down to form a hook. This is done using the $\frac{1}{32}$ " former and resting the petal on a flat polished support. See diagram G. Care must be taken to prevent accidental closure of the seam hook.

Nine 2" lengths of 0.080" brass wire should be cut from a roll with a curve of about 10.5" radius: this wire reinforces the joints in the horn rim.

Assembly of the petals can now take place by sliding 1" of the wire into one petal rim and connecting the next petal on to the protruding 1" of wire, and hooking the seams together until the elbow end of the petal is reached. The seams can be temporarily held together by making a short cut in the end of the petals and forming a lock "tab". This will hold a pair of petals until the seams are locked. See diagram H.

Locking the seams comes next. This requires two pairs of specially-made rollers and a rolling frame, which holds the rollers accurately in line with each other and capable of applying a considerable closing pressure while the rollers are rotated over the seam length.

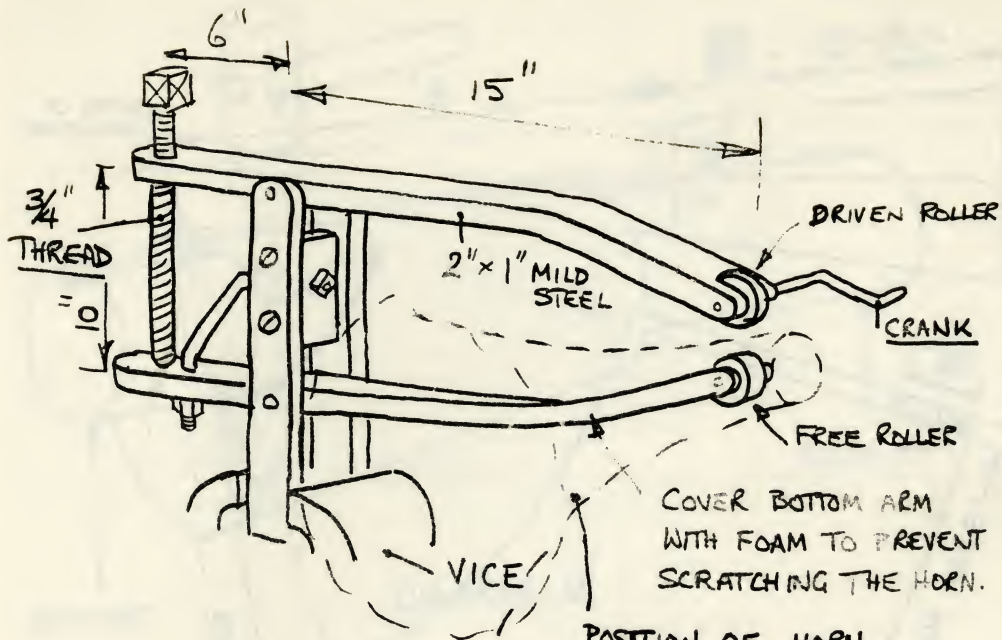
The frame I constructed was made from 2" x 1" mild steel as shown in diagram J. The rollers shown in diagram K are made of mild steel and about 2" diameter. Their width should be a good fit in the fork end cut in each of the frame arms - about 1" wide. The grooves should be 0.155" wide x .050" deep. The upper rolls have threaded holes in them are driven by a crank on to which they thread bind. The left hand fork has a tapping size hole in it, while the right one has a clearance hole. The lower rollers have clearance holes, as do the forks, and a simple pin is used as an axle. These lower rollers are steeply chamfered to prevent marking the petal surfaces. The groove sides should be lightly radiused to prevent cutting the brass.

Build up the horn in groups of three petals and then assemble these groups as before, making sure that the seams are fully 'home' during the locking process.

The primary cone must be marked out next. Its dimensions must of course suit the machine elbow and the small end of the bell about 1" from its end. For a cone of the size previously mentioned, the dimensions are shown in diagram L. Use a pencil to mark out the 0.025" - 0.030" thick brass to prevent scratching. Cut out the cone and as with the other seams turn one out and the other in at $\frac{1}{8}$ " width, using straight formers (folding bars). Close them down over thin strips of $\frac{1}{32}$ " sheet metal to prevent closure of the seam 'hooks'. Form the cone over a suitable core stake or round bar if necessary by hand until the seams meet. Remove the scrap strips and hook the seams together.

The cone seam must be locked with the seam on the inside. This requires the use of a grooved steel bar over which the cone is placed, while the seam is locked by malleting. Diagram M.

After locking, the cone can be evened out by hand or over a suitable wooden core former with a groove cut along it, large enough to take the seam. The cone is attached to the horn petals by a swaged joint. To find the position of this joint, the cone should be fitted tightly over the horn and its position marked by pencil. After separating them, the swage is rolled into the cone $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the wide end, using a swaging Jenny. Diagram N.



POSITION OF HORN DURING USE.

DIAGRAM J

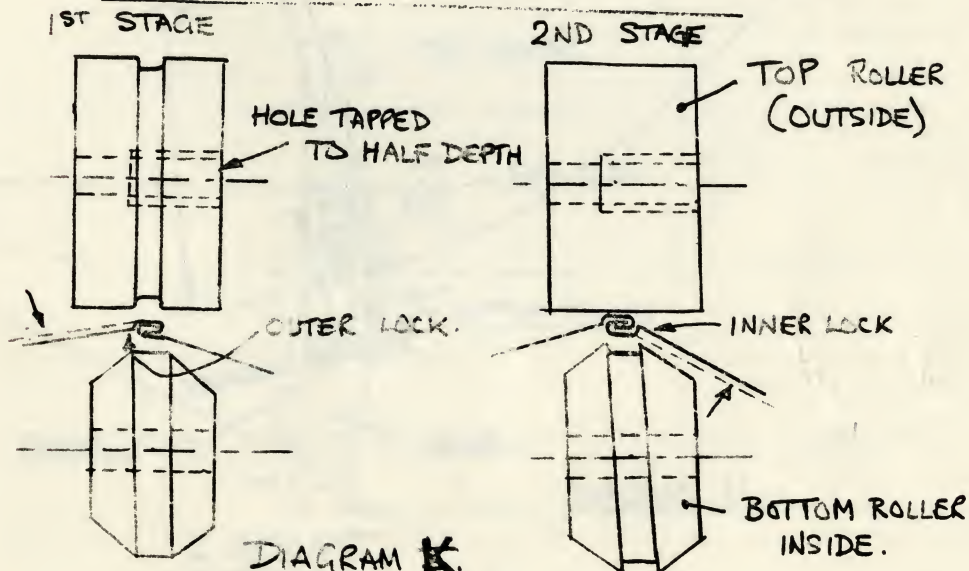


DIAGRAM K.

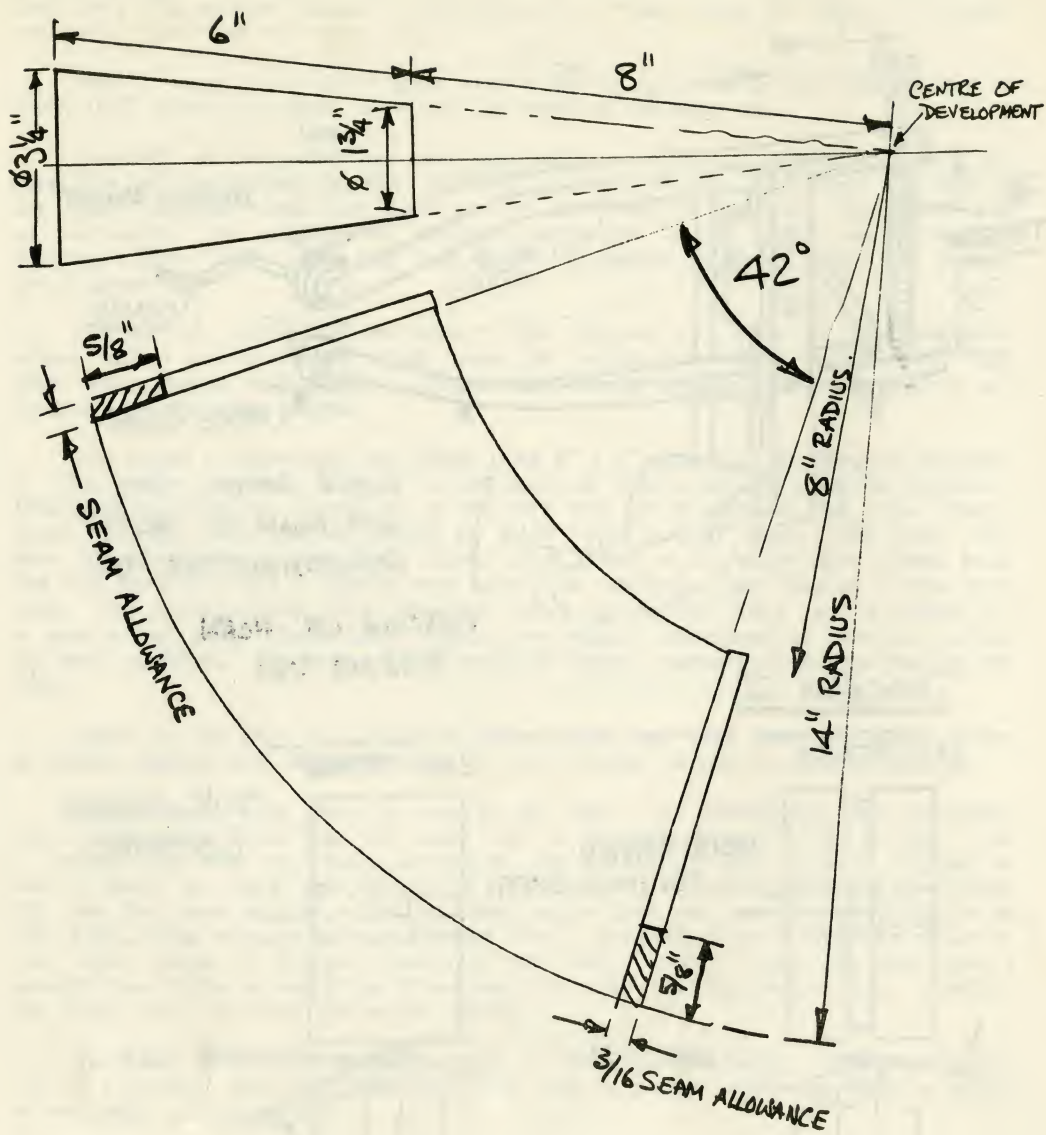
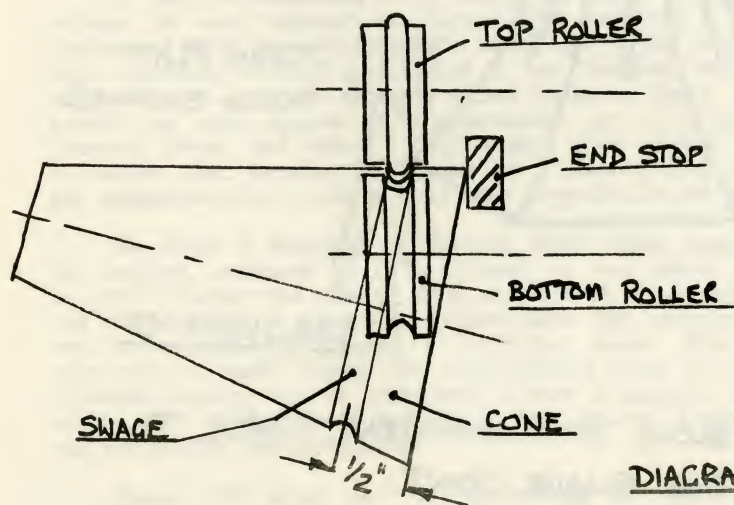
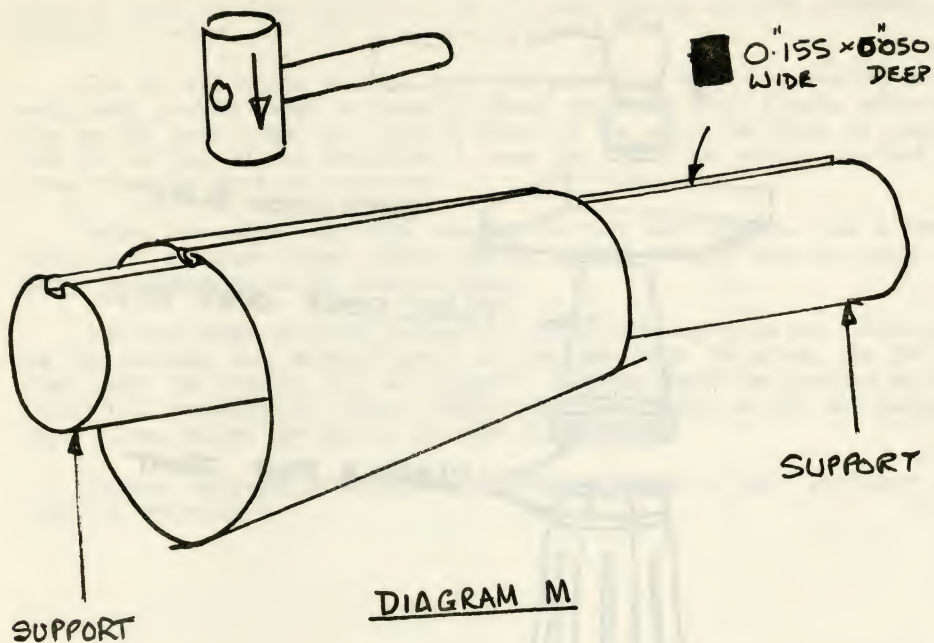


DIAGRAM L



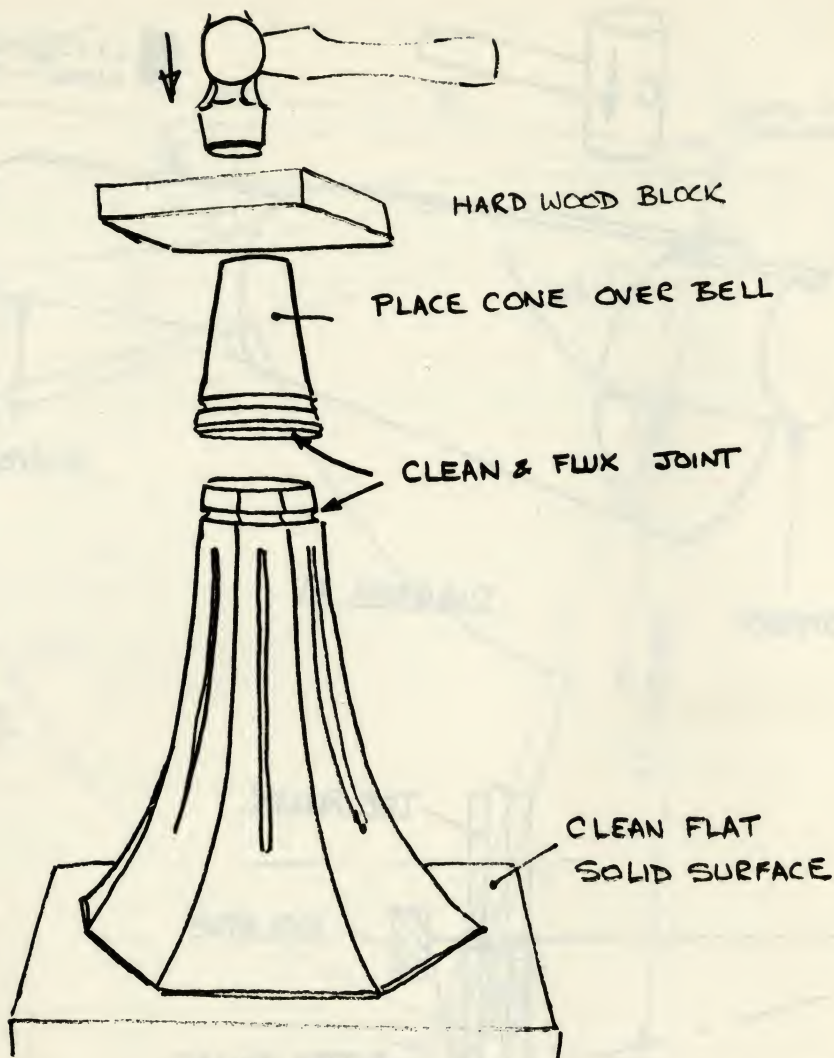


DIAGRAM O

STRIKE WOOD BLOCK WITH SUFFICIENT FORCE TO ASSEMBLE THE SWAGE JOINT.

The raw edge of the cone can be masked by gripping it between the swaging rolls for about $\frac{1}{8}$ " and, while revolving the rolls, pushing the cone downwards until a chamfer is formed. 10° - 15° is all that is needed.

Cut off the surplus material from the petals 1" above the pencilled line, using snips, and carefully swage a groove $\frac{1}{2}$ " above the pencil line. Finally, after applying flux to the joint faces, the cone is fitted to the petals as shown in Diagram O. This is the part of the production I least like and I am always surprised by the stress which the horn can withstand.

Solder the swage joint while standing the horn bell upwards. Use a very small flame and multicore solder which can be applied directly into the joint without danger of running on to the other surfaces.

The final stage is to cut the bayonet slot to suit the elbow pin. After estimating the starting and stopping points of the slot from the elbow, fit the wooden cone inside the primary core as a support. Centre punch the positions of the slot extremities, and drill two holes. Using a junior hacksaw, cut the slot between the holes. Dress up the slot and try the horn in the elbow.

Remove the horn, polish it and, if required, lacquer it with 'Joy' clear lacquer. Refit it and enjoy it.

LONDON MEETING

JUNE 24th 1986

It came as something of a surprise to arrive at the Bloomsbury Institute and witness the rare spectacle of George Frow operating a turntable and amplification equipment which were undoubtedly connected to the public electricity supply. On these occasions we are accustomed to our President demonstrating something elegantly acoustic, such as the odd Edison Idelia or Opera. The explanation was that tonight we were treated to a programme not of cylinder records but of Edison Diamond Discs, and nobody would expect even George Frow to risk transporting an Edison Disc machine to London for a ninety-minute recital when we have modern equipment there which is more than adequate for the purpose.

We heard a selection of Diamond Discs which progressed chronologically from the earliest, produced in 1913, through to the advent of the needle-cut records in 1929. George was able to point out each of the periodic changes in label design, and also changes in the material from which the records were stamped, which gave rise to noticeable differences in the surface noise. The programme had been compiled with as much thought for entertainment value as for the illustration of these technical details, and we were regaled with a balanced variety of performances by artists such as the Frisco Jass Band, Billy Murray, Fanny Brice, Giuseppe Anselmi, and the Golden Gate Orchestra.

During the latter part of the evening we heard some remarkable material taken from vending machine records, and from speech records made by Thomas

Edison and others on various occasions. They included the opening of the Fifth Radio World's Fair, the handing back of the first phonograph to the United States by the London Science Museum, and the first broadcast of "The Edison Hour".

A.O.Leon-Hall

JULY 29th 1986

BERT WILLIAMS ON RECORD

Some years ago the Smithsonian Institute in Washington planned to publish an album of records by the famous black performer Bert Williams, as part of their series "American Musical Theater". They invited Allen Debus of Chicago University to write the sleeve-notes for the album, he having earlier provided notes for a boxed set of Victor Herbert records included in the same series. The Bert Williams album has never yet appeared and maybe never will, but Professor Debus used his notes as the basis for a lecture which he deolivered to the ARSC in New York in 1982, and again to the CLPGS in London tonight.

It is strange that Bert Williams is so little known here in Britain, and his records are so rarely seen. He was extremely popular in the United States where his records sold well, and when he came from Broadway to London with the first all-black musical show, "In Dahomey", he was well received. In fact, the company was summoned to Buckingham Palace for a Command Performance to celebrate the Prince of Wales' birthday, and Edward VII required Williams to teach him how to do the Cake Walk.

Tonight's lecture covered Williams' life and career, from his joining Martin and Seig's Mastodon Minstrels in 1883 until his death in 1922. Professor Debus played a good selection of records of the performer and of his friend and partner, George Walker. While we listened to these we were shown slides of sheet-music illustrated covers which successfully evoked the atmosphere of the period while also providing portraits of Williams and Walker.

To round off an excellent talk, we were shown a silent film starring Bert Williams, entitled "A Natural Born Gambler". This confirmed the testaments we heard earlier, of an artist who had merely to walk on to the stage and stand quite still to have an audience in fits of laughter: Williams' performance showed a subtlety and restraint uncommon in the Biograph shorts of the time. (We owe it to our own Duncan Miller that we were able to see the film: he provided what must be the last Standard 8 projector remaining in the Home Counties.)

It is hoped that the substance of Professor Debus' talk might soon appear as an article in this magazine.

A.O.Leon-Hall

Only a Ditch Between

Michael Hegarty takes a look at the recording of Irish Traditional Artists in America

The Irish have been in America since the early 1600s. The old story of the fisherman who hauled up a cartwheel from the deep when some miles from the shore and claimed it was proof that they had been travelling to America before the deluge cannot have been correct! The disastrous famines in the 1800s swelled the numbers of Irish in the New World and with them came their music and song. Music halls and vaudevilles provided outlets for the better and more talented among them, and it was only to be expected that many of them would find their way into the earliest recording studios.

George Gaskin (1863 - 1920), who was born in Belfast, had extensive lists with several companies and he specialised in popular hits of the day. Dan Quinn (1859 - 1938), whose piercing voice recorded well in the early days was a prolific recorder of Irish songs. William F. Hooley (1861 - 1918) came to the United States via England and recorded bass solos before coming the bass voice in many of the popular quartettes including Edison's Premier and Victor's American Quartettes.

Patrick Sansfield Gilmore (1829 - 1892), who emigrated from Athlone, County Westmeath, the birthplace of John McCormack, must have been the first recording Irish instrumentalist. He was known as the "Father of the Concert Band" and is said to have been the first American bandmaster to gain international fame. He composed many pieces including "When Johnny Comes Marching Home". In the Society's reprint of the Columbia 1904-5 catalogue, Gilmore's Band has almost 200 titles listed, varying from "Medley of Irish Airs" to the "Italian in Algiers" overture. When Gilmore died the band carried on for some years under the leadership of Victor Herbert.

Victor Herbert was born in Dublin in 1859 and was a grandson of Samuel Lover, the famous novelist. Herbert had played many important concerts before travelling to the U.S. to play as 'cello soloist with the Metropolitan Orchestra N.Y.C. Victor Herbert recorded some of his own compositions on Blue Amberols and some readers may recall a 1930s film "The Great Victor Herbert".

The first commercial recordings of traditional Irish music would seem to have been made in 1899 by James C. McAuliffe on the Uilleann pipes. He recorded some fifteen of these for Edison. These seem to be the only ones issued of the pipes. Another Irish piper worked differently. Patsy Touhy recorded cylinders in his New York home at \$1.00 each and could offer a choice of up to 150 airs, marches and dance tunes. It was claimed that his playing of this most difficult instrument was excellent and far superior to McAuliffe's work.

Touhy made a few discs for Victor in 1921. The March 1921 catalogue supplement states: 18727 "Patsy Touhy has a medley of bagpipe reels on the other side.

He has quick fingers, a great sense of rhythm, and he can get out of weird harmony to set the ancient bogwater circulating hard in the ancient blood. This is his second Victor reel medley and it includes "The Steam Packet", "Morning Star" and "Miss McCleod's" reels, all of them dance classics of the younger and less self-conscious world."

The other side referred to was a medley of Irish jigs, not by an Irishman but by the accordionist John G.Kimmel, who was known as the "Irish Dutchman". The accordion had always been popular for the playing of Irish dance music and Kimmel was first on the recording scene to play it for this purpose. He recorded for many labels, starting about 1904 and played with an authentic style that in the opinion of many has never been equalled. Kimmel, it would appear, had learned his music in Irish company as it followed all the known conventions for the various pieces. It is often a source of wonder how an American born of German parents was attracted to Irish music and could play it so expertly. Some of Kimmel's records appeared under the pseudonym of Edward McConnell on the Imperial label in the U.K.

Political events in Ireland in 1916 may have had an effect on recordings in America because it was in the latter part of that year that the first disc of traditional Irish music by Irish artists appeared. Columbia issued a few recordings by Edward Herborn and James Wheeler - accordeon and banjo players respectively. Before this date such Irish music had been supplied by the various house artists of the recording companies, Harold Vio, Joseph Samuels and Charles d'Almaine to name just a few. The success of the Columbia discs may have caused Edison to issue two Blue Amberols, in January 1918 and March of the same year of Patrick G. Scanlan the accordeonist with accompaniment by Denis L.Smith. The dealers' list stated 3361 - Medley of Irish Jigs - "A novel record - an accordeon solo with piano, it really is great - you'll agree to that when you hear it". (I haven't yet!) "The medley comprises three famous jigs, Mrs. Walshes, Donnybrook Fair and Father O'Flynn". How successful these were is not known but these seem to be the only two issued. Scanlan went on to record for Columbia some time later.

The 1920s seem to have been the golden years for Irish traditional records in America. The many newly formed record companies were prepared to cater for the smaller ethnic groups. The Okeh, Gennett, New Republic, Vocalion and Celtic companies were joined shortly by the big ones, Columbia and Victor. Columbia went so far as to issue a special green-labelled Irish series in the U.S. This must have been successful if one takes into account the fact that these are still found in secondhand shops in Ireland, having been brought 'home' years ago. Most traditional artists held down 9 to 5 jobs (or, to be honest, many hours longer) as well as appearing in dance hall and music saloon revues.

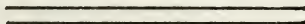
Frank Quinn who had come from County Longford was perhaps the most recorded. He was a New York fire patrolman and his records on several labels included comic songs such as "I Wish I Was Single Again", accordeon, trumpet and violin solos as well as duets with other singers. Peter J.Conlon, a Galway man and an excellent accordeon player probably reduced the market share of Kimmels records with lively and stylish playing. He also had the honour of having a particular model of accordeon named after him by a well-known maker. From Sligo came James Morrison on the violin, Sean Nolan, also violin from Dublin, William Mullaly (concertina), Sean O'Nolan from Co. Wicklow wrote many songs, sang them and played the pipes and the list goes on and on. John Griffin, who recorded for Columbia and labelled as "The 5th. Avenue Busman" on the U.S. issues was a singer,

lilter and player of the wooden flute. One of his recordings, "The Real Old Mountain Dew" was still in the Irish Regal-Zonophone catalogue until 78s were finally withdrawn in 1961. The British 'G' series of Regals contained many of these recordings.

There were of course many groups of musicians and bands, these becoming more popular as a result of the electrical recording processes. O'Leary's Irish Minstrels, Dan Sullivan's Shamrock Band, John McGettigoo and his Irish Minstrels and the Four Provinces Orchestra were among the most popular and many records were made in-sets for dancing purposes.

Most popular of all were the Flanagan Brothers. They recorded Irish music, songs and vaudeville sketches for many labels including Victor, Columbia and Gennett. The Flanagan boys had all been born in Waterford in the last years of the 19th century. Joe played accordeon and sang, Mike sang and played banjo and Lewis, the harp guitar. A Jew's harp was added at times. Their playing in bars and dance halls brought them to the attention of the recording companies. On this side of the ocean these records sold in huge quantities and I quite often meet people who can quote line after line of the dialogue from some of those old vaudeville sketches such as "Flanagan's Chase the Banshee" (Fairy Woman), Flanagan's visit Killarney" etc. The Regal records state "Flanagan Bros." Accordeon and Banjo Duet, and the reason was that Lewis had appeared in the earlier discs. He died a young man as a result of poor health contacted whilst soldiering in the Great War. Recently I came upon a medley of polkas by Joe Flanagan on an acoustic Regal without even being given label credits - simply 'accordeon solo'. (G8530). One recording made by the Flanagans "My Irish Molly O" was re-recorded in a similar style by a traditional group in Ireland a few years ago. It made a big impact in the pops chart of the day.

The depression had a big effect on the record industry and for the Irish ones things were never quite the same again. There were some issued once again when the depression lifted, but that is another story. Recently I had the pleasure of making contact with Mike Flanagan, living fit and well in Albany N.Y. and still playing a little banjo at the fine age of 89.



Dear Christopher,

Frank Andrews must be congratulated on his great 'sort-out' of the affairs of the Homophone Company in Great Britain. This has long been awaited, and had a slight personal interest for me through a business connection years ago with Ebonestos Industries, with whom Homophone became associated.

Something in 'The Closing Chapters' reminded me that I've had a Regal-Zonophone since its issue in 1938 that didn't fit in with others of that label, and is obviously one of those sold off by Sterno. MR 2651 is of the Royal Horse Guards Band (Bells across the Meadow/By the Blue Hawaiian Waters, matr. S1088/9). By Regal-Zonophone standards of the day, the sound is congested; it runs too close to the label and the run-off is not eccentric. This band under Capt. W.J.Dunn MC had appeared on many Sternos, but only this once on Regal-Zonophone. Did any other Sternos reach the Columbia or Parlophone label?

George L. Frow

All the Phono' the Fair

by Ted Cunningham

All was bustle when I arrived early on October 4th at the Village Hall, Pyrford, Surrey, for this year's Phonofair, hosted by the Chilterns Branch of the Society. There was an air of excitement and frenzied activity not often encountered in this quiet unassertive backwater. Pyrford's only claim to celebrity is that the Hillandale News is distributed from here. In the normal way of things its sleepy rural demeanour is sundered only once every two months, when the aged postmistress staggers out of town groaning beneath the burden of great sackfuls of your favourite magazine, bound for exotic destinations such as Tokyo Japan, Denver Colorado and Preston Lancs.

My early arrival had been made necessary by a well-meaning Chiltonian who had persuaded me to take a stall. Before the doors were opened to the eager throng I had to unload a carful of records which, I am glad to say, were purchased in good numbers as the day progressed. All the same I resolved not to get involved again in stallholding so long as I continue to hold any sort of office in the Society, since the place was packed full of interesting people whom I wished to meet: I still do, because I was prevented from making their acquaintance, being too occupied hawking my wares.

Another firm resolution for future Phonofairs: never call a Committee Meeting to be held on the premises while the festivities are in progress. On this occasion there was a very special reason, which I will come to at the end of this article, but the consequence for your Officers and Committee was that they had to retire and conduct business on your behalf exactly when the most interesting and hilarious event of the day was taking place. It was a programme by the phonograph cylinder manufacturers Miller Morris, which proved to be a source of much wonder and merriment. Duncan Miller and Paul Morris presented an entertainment displaying a high standard of showmanship, inviting members of the audience singly and communally to record their voices on to wax cylinders. I swear that the early fairground barnstormers who first exploited Mr. Edison's invention could hardly have caused more wonder and laughter.

The item which followed (to markedly less hilarity) was the Society's Annual General Meeting, which made every effort to caper through its formalities as quickly as could be, so as to cause the least interruption to the Chilterns Branch's programme of festivities. A few items from the A.G.M. deserve mention by me, especially the news that the membership subscription must be raised next year. This is sad, but remember the present subscription has been held unchanged for six years. Printing costs of the magazine, and postal rates, have risen enormously in that time, and a further postage increase will follow only a few weeks from the A.G.M., so I hope you will agree with me that the new subscription of £6.00 (U.K.) will still be a modest sum considering all that membership of the Society confers, even to those members who know us only from their six annual copies of the magazine.

The next item of importance was Mike Field's revelation that the Society, having had the free use of a computer to look after its membership records for the past few years, is now acquiring its own as a cost of some £1,300. The announcement drew the astute observation from one member that the new equipment would cost each member only 17p. each year. While this is true in a way, the fact is that the money for the computer is already available in the Society's funds, and none of the cost will come out of future subscriptions. On the contrary, if we return to the previous "pen and paper" methods of membership records when access to the "free" computer comes to an end shortly, the cost of providing the same service as that given now would add some 50 or 60 pence to each subscription. But, of course, the truth of the matter is that members would not get the same service as now.

The most pleasant part of the Annual General Meeting came at its end, when our President proposed that David Roberts should be elected as a Vice-President of this Society, and I am glad to report that after only a token resistance, Dave agreed to honour us by accepting that role. Dave has worked so selflessly and to such good effect for the Society over the years, and has only recently cast off much (but by no means all) of his burden that I regard his ennoblement to be no more than his due. And all those present at Pyrford Village Hall were clearly of the same opinion.

L O N D O N M E E T I N G

August 16th 1986

For the third successive August the Society abandoned the Bloomsbury Institute, forsook the heat and dust of the metropolis, and headed gratefully for the comparatively Arcadian boskiness of Neasden. Narrowly avoiding being swept up by swarms of jovial football enthusiasts (occupied with a meeting of their own at the adjacent hamlet of Wembley) our members assembled to hear Frank Andrews deliver another of his impeccably researched lectures. His subject on this occasion was neither records nor record manufacturers, but record catalogues.

Who would have thought that a simple examination of the catalogues and supplements issued by the Gramophone Company between the years of 1898 and 1926 could arouse such a high degree of interest? But with Len Watts at hand to show slides of the actual catalogues, page by page, and with occasional playing of the records featured in them, Frank held our attention for two-and-a-half hours. This included a break of thirty minutes or so, during which Mrs. Andrews provided much-appreciated refreshment, while the Society Chairman apparently got himself locked in the lavatory, being extracted only at a charge to the ratepayers of the Borough of Brent.

A.O.Leon-Hall

